

**A Meeting on the evening of December 4, 1979  
was held by the collective of Dumont Press Graphix Limited**

The following notes are somewhat sketchy and may only serve to enliven the memories of those persons attending. Alison and Bill kept the notes.

**Shirley** feels that the collective is quite small. Sales efforts have been disappointing, but would in any case take time. Michael's and Eliza's departures have a bearing on how she feels the collective is now less in a position to survive. She cannot make a commitment after the spring of 1980.

**Eliza** "Before I got the other job, I felt that the structure wasn't suited to such a small organization. Morale was bad and I felt powerless to do anything about it. The financial situation was serious, but something could be done about it." Eliza's powerlessness to improve morale was a source of frustration. She wasn't convinced that a raise would have any effect on morale. Eliza defined this morale problem as an inability of people to want to deal with things, be it customers, hassles, mechanical problems, or anything else for that matter.

**Kae** suggested that you refer to her paper of this period. Kae noted that she felt that this was the end of an era. *Imprint*, when it bought its own typesetting equipment, was for Dumont the epilog. A new generation of technology and people has changed things such that the cushions of people, work, and money don't exist anymore.

**Michael** If people here decide to continue, there will have to be an extraordinary commitment for rebuilding. Michael observed that the last two months were very volatile, which for him featured personality hassles with two or three people. He felt hampered by indecision and disagreement, and wanted to be able to use his initiative, but he felt that such wasn't the case for other people. He then allowed that this was perhaps a feeling shared by almost everyone in the shop. "Why am I here?" Dumont is still very important and "I care about the fundamentals of why it was set up and why I would hope it would continue." Michael went to Trigraphics because he couldn't work in a non-commercial shop under the conditions which didn't allow him to develop his potential but not be bothered by so many conflicting channels. Trigraphics allows him to know what he is doing and get better at it.

**Moe** "I feel disconnected. I feel peculiar because I have skills which the shop needs, which are skills which only I have, but I

don't exercise any responsibility in financial work. I don't do work which I don't like to do." Should Dumont continue past the winter, Moe would move into town because she feels that her best work has been done while she was alone (living that is). Moe isn't sure how enterprise and political activity work together. It is odd that one's political activity is one's living. "I'll take it to the wire."

Moe feels that she is going to have to make some changes in her life to help Dumont out. We need communications with other collectives. There are a lot of people around who will work for a collective such as ours and receive low pay and the remainder "in other coin". Dumont is important because all through our past involvements, everyone has called upon Dumont to aid him or herself.

**Bill** hopes we can continue, but wants to see assessment by competent people. He believes that it will be impossible for everyone to agree about the nature of a continuing Dumont but that we must all seek compromises. Our financial situation, in Bill's opinion, is very bad. "I see it worse than other people. My third potential bankruptcy." He sympathizes with Kae's paper and has seen the specialization at other shops such as *Vehicule Press* but feels that this might be difficult to implement after so many years of non-specialization. Bill thinks that we do need an injection of capital and that those who do put money into the shop mustn't be given to expect their money back very soon.

Bill believes that three things we need to do besides increasing business and efficiency and happiness by all are:

- (1) Construct a good campaign to go to financial institutions with.
  - (2) Go to friends for more money.
  - (3) Hire more people. All of this must be done quickly.
- Bill would like to continue in sales or otherwise until spring when he will be probably be leaving. Slight possibility that he might go to school in Guelph and be able to still work part-time in Dumont after spring.

**Barb** is concerned about morale and problems of small jobs. Barb is also concerned about Dumont pushing itself to do small jobs too fast. "I refuse to believe we are in as bad a position as we appear to be in." Barb wants Dumont to continue very much. Why? Because it is important to groups in the area. She sometimes wonders about her skills in the shop and what use they are. Barb has wondered if it would have been better to leave the shop because of a lack of skills. Barb feels that she now knows more about her responsibilities in the shop and what has to be done.

Barb's commitment to Dumont has changed somewhat. "When I started, I didn't have any idea how long I'd stay. Financially I think we jumped the gun buying new equipment too soon, prices too low and too many other factors. Barb said that specialization would leave people out.

**Michael** said that specialization would not save the shop, people would.

**Alison** is extremely glad that she was away. and that she wasn't here for all the disasters and she feels stronger for having been away on vacation. Alison said that although she had never been good with money matters, she always had money. She feels that she could get money. Alison is optimistic about the sales report, and about the prospects for January and February. "I don't know how to deal with changing shop structure. No flexibility. I've seen other places go under with this change." Alison commented on the problems of status when specialization takes place.

**Kae** said that flexibility drives her around the bend. She would enjoy learning all about a particular production job and being responsible for it.

People expressed uncertainty about the mechanisms whereby specialization might be implemented.

**Shirley** suggested a *mixed economy*. Some people specialized, others not. Specialization creates efficiency in moving work through the shop.

**Michael** said everything had to be specialized in order to make it work.

**Shirley** said that efficiency occurs when we are organized in a variety of ways.

**Michael** suggested a departmental breakdown (*instead of individual nervous breakdowns*).

**Alison for Steve** Steve didn't think that Alison could represent his views. He said to do anything necessary to keep the shop going. He is willing to see structural changes but is not certain about the nature of his labour commitment in the short term. She reported that Steve said that new people, new structure would aid the recovery of morale.

**Kae** felt a mixed economy could be a problem for her.

**Eliza on specialization** Good – dramatic increase in efficiency, better quality control, general shop cleanliness, more awareness of management functions. Bad – loss in flexibility, workers not being able to change jobs at *drop of a hat*, hiring becomes problematic. Six-month terms might be too long or not long enough if, for instance, we are talking about financial work or VIP maintenance. We might need a more elaborate and well thought out scheme for specialization. Layoffs might be real rather than arranged.

**Moe** says that it sounds like the Peter Principle and that specialization would not be a panacea for our problems.

**Michael** says that the most skilled people would take on coordinator roles.

**Moe** likes to take a particular job and “see it through”.

**Eliza** says that the four-day week works against the job coordinator.

**Kae** is fed up about not having control over her own situation.

**Barb** suggested that the weight of responsibility might not be shared as well as it should be.

**Shirley** said that notions of individual accountability have become blurred, and that she could coordinate a job better when she started than she can now. Being a coordinator is frustrating because you are being harassed because the buck stops at your feet, but you are impotent to effect any change.

**Moe** reiterated her fear of administrative work and her love of production.

**Kae** stated her love of the opposite. Specialized skills can give a person a sense of self-worth.

**Moe** said she hated working at Dumont Press Graphix because she felt guilty of the time she was spending doing the work.

**Stop the Press** Michael Canivet, Jane Harding and Murray Noll are reported to be interested in re-joining the shop in some way. Michael Kelley will be asking Michael Canivet to prepare a written proposal. It would seem apparent that the new partnership would necessitate some very important changes. It was felt that these changes might not be acceptable.

